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**Testimony of Cheri Quickmire,
Executive Director, Connecticut Common Cause
Before Government Administration and Elections Committee
March 1, 2010**

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Cheri Quickmire, and I am the Executive Director of Common Cause in Connecticut. Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit citizens' lobby that works to improve the way Connecticut's government operates. We have more than 7,200 members and activists in Connecticut.

I am here to testify in support of HB 5321 (Raised) An Act Concerning a Pilot Program for Municipal Primary Day Registration

Common Cause supports Election Day Registration (EDR), sometimes called "Same Day Registration" as a simple way Connecticut can encourage voter participation. EDR allows eligible voters to register and cast a ballot on Election Day. While this bill only offers this opportunity on a limited basis – for municipal primary day – we support the concept of "Same Day Registration" and look forward additional opportunities to improve access to voting for citizens in Connecticut.

Eight states allow voters to register to vote at their polling place on Election Day - (Montana (passed in 1960), Maine, Minnesota, Wisconsin (1970s), Wyoming, Idaho, New Hampshire (1990s), Iowa (2007) Rhode Island allows it for presidential elections only and North Carolina (2007) allows new voters to register and vote on the same day during an early voting period just prior to Election Day.

- **People Who Move** -- Huge portions of the population move between Presidential elections. In many cases, especially for people who move frequently, updating voter registration is easy to forget. EDR ensures that mobile doesn't have to mean immobilized.
- **Young People** -- Young voters are a huge beneficiary of EDR in part because they move so often. States with Election Day Registration have noticed large surges in youth voting.
- **Historically Disenfranchised Voters** -- Voters who have faced discrimination historically are still among the most likely to face registration errors, often through no fault of their own.

- **Eligible Voters Mistakenly Purged from Voting Rolls** – Allows them to cast a meaningful ballot.

EDR counteracts arbitrary voter registration deadlines. Voter registration deadlines vary from state to state and seem to have little bearing on smooth elections. 28 states close off voter registration 25 or more days before the election – well before the media and the public have given real attention to the races.

EDR is cost-effective and easier for elections officials to administer than provisional ballots. Elections are no more expensive to administer in EDR states than in non-EDR states. A 2007 survey of local election officials in EDR states – New Hampshire, Maine, Idaho, Wisconsin, Wyoming and Minnesota describe the incremental cost of EDR as minimal.

EDR does not encourage voter fraud. A recent analysis of 2002 – 2005 data from EDR states found very little evidence of voter fraud. And the great majority of local elections officials participating in EDR states rated current fraud-prevention measures sufficient to protect the integrity of elections. 2

There are various strategies to permit early voting:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 states allow no-excuse pre-Election Day in-person voting - either early voting on a voting machine or in-person absentee voting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 states and the District of Columbia require an excuse for in-person absentee voting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 state, Oregon, is all vote-by mail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 states allow no-excuse absentee voting by mail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 states and the District of Columbia require an excuse to vote absentee by mail

EDR can be a secure and easy way to register voters, and one that can dramatically improve turnout rates. Connecticut could potentially benefit from 10 point increase in voter participation and make it one of the states with the best voter turnout.

A study released in February, 2010 by R. Michael Alvarez (California Institute of Technology) and Jonathan Nagler (New York University) analyzed the likely impact of voter turnout if same day registration was adopted in Maryland. Under their proposal, eligible voters who miss the current 21-day deadline for registering may be able to register to vote during the state's 7-day early voting period, or on Election Day.

The authors offer the following voter turnout estimates for Maryland under Same Day Registration:

- Overall turnout could go up by 4.3 percent.
- Turnout among those aged 18 to 25 could increase by 9.1 percent.
- Turnout for those who have moved in the last six months could increase by 7.2 percent.

We all witnessed the remarkable turnout in this last Presidential election. Even more remarkable than the voters who lined up to exercise their right to vote on Election Day were the 40 million voters who voted before Election Day. This translates to thirty percent of the total voting! Colorado had the highest early voter turnout at 79.3%; Pennsylvania had the lowest at 4.1%. 1 Connecticut Common Cause supports 'no excuse' absentee and early in-person voting.

1. Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action, Election Day Registration: A Ground Level View (November 2007), http://www.demos.org/pubs/EDR_Clerks.pdf.
2. Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action, Election Day Registration: Voters Win with Election Day Registration (Winter 2009).

